

Written Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 1054 and Added Supports

My name is Dr. Lydia Conca. I am a resident of Tolland, Connecticut and a Professor of Education at the University at Saint Joseph, where I teach and conduct research in reading and related disabilities. I am providing this testimony in support of Senate Bill 1054, An Act Concerning Students with Dyslexia. I also support the need for additions to the bill to provide licensed teachers the opportunity to be recognized for possession of advanced expertise in dyslexia. Specifically, I ask that the bill include the introduction of a new credential in reading disability intervention.

In the words of nationally recognized expert, Dr. Louisa Moats, “Teaching Reading is Teaching Rocket Science.” Teaching foundational reading skills – or how to decipher printed words on a page - is built on a complex body of knowledge that translates into an even more complex set of teaching skills. Research has contributed greatly to understanding these disorders and how to treat them, yet there are still many students in Connecticut’s schools who cannot read, and many teachers who do not possess the necessary skills and/or opportunities to teach this population of students. Teaching knowledge and skill sets for dyslexia is a highly specialized area, deserving of its own line of study and teaching credential.

Increasing the pool of licensed teachers who know and can use the research on the diagnosis and treatment of reading disabilities will contribute to Connecticut’s reputation as an educational innovator. Approval and extension of Bill SB 1054 helps students with dyslexia and reading disabilities become better readers by providing them proper intervention. Approval and extension of Bill SB 1054 helps classroom teachers by providing them informed supports and resources.

Thank you for your attention to the literacy needs of students and support of the dedicated teachers who are responsible for their growth.